

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## A SALUTE TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 1996

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me this February in celebrating Black History Month. I would like to take a moment to reflect on the courageous leadership and civic duty that has shaped the communities of New York throughout this decade. As we approach a new century, New Yorkers of all ethnic backgrounds will face a new set of economic, social, and political challenges. If we stop and recognize the perseverance of African-Americans in times of change, their record of commitment to the pursuit of prosperity, integrity, and opportunity for their families and friends speaks for itself.

The tireless work of community and religious leaders in guiding African-American communities have done much to improve the quality of life in our city. I am proud to honor this important occasion where African-Americans join hands to acknowledge their accomplishments and their unique contributions to our society and the world.

The level of civic participation in today's culture is depressingly low among average American citizens. However, I am always inspired by the surge of community spirit and leadership from African-Americans in New York. Our society would be a better place if more Americans emulated the civic duty and moral strength of their African-American counterparts. I hope that Black History Month is recognized and honored by citizens of all backgrounds. I honor the work and vision of my African-American colleagues in Congress and throughout New York. May our city continue to be blessed with their leadership.

## HONORING LIVERMORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HON. BILL BAKER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 1996

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, Money Magazine is generally recognized as one of the most reliable financial guides in the country. That's why, when Money recognized the public schools in Livermore, CA as among the "100 Top Schools in Towns You Can Afford," America took notice.

Livermore is a lovely community situated amid rolling hills and farmland in central California's east bay region. Home of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore is committed to the community values that make for a high quality of life. It is not surprising to me that its school system would be cited for excellence.

Money set demanding criteria as the basis of its selections. Money said the school sys-

tems on its list are rated in the academic top 20 percent of all systems. Money also scored its "Top 100" in the context of housing affordability. In other words, Money combined high scholastic standards with community livability—and Livermore was one of the top 100 school systems out of 16,665 systems in the Nation to meet this stringent test.

It is an honor for me to recognize the parents, teachers, administrators, and students of the Livermore public school system for achieving this exceptional honor. I am proud to represent this remarkable group of people in Congress, and appreciate all they have done to make their schools and community the wonderful places they are.

## AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA CELEBRATES NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 1996

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the Autism Society of America [ASA] in recognition of January as National Autism Awareness Month.

This has been a year of progress and achievement for the ASA. Last spring, in response to a request from Congress, the National Institutes of Health [NIH] held an Autism State-of-the-Science Conference. The conference brought researchers, clinicians and parents together in an effort to evaluate existing science and identify new areas for research.

The conference highlighted the fact that autism affects some 400,000 Americans. While the exact cause of autism is still unknown, conference participants agreed that, at least for some individuals with autism, there appears to be a genetic link—one that could very probably be identified with the work being conducted by the NIH National Center for Human Genome Research.

Undoubtedly the most important outcome of the conference was the conclusion that more research is desperately needed. Autism is a lifelong disability. Its social, emotional, and financial costs are staggering, ranging from \$30,000 to \$100,000 per year per person—millions of dollars for each individual over the course of a normal lifespan. These numbers speak to the need for more research on the possible causes of autism as well as medical, social, and behavioral interventions.

The ASA was the major force behind this conference. Backed by the strength and knowledge of its 18,000 parent members, the ASA has been the primary source of information and referral on autism and the largest collective voice representing the autism community. Founded over three decades ago, its members are now connected through a volunteer network of over 220 chapters in 48 States.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Autism Society of America for its 30 years of service and in sharing in their celebration of National Autism Awareness Month.

## TIME TO CLARIFY THE ROLE OF CHURCHES IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 1996

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation along with my colleague from New York, CHARLIE RANGEL, which will allow churches to carry on a minimal degree of grassroots lobbying and campaign activity without jeopardizing their tax exempt status.

The proposal can best be described in two parts, with the first part focusing on the grassroots lobbying activity of churches. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code states that "no substantial part of [church] activities [can] consist of carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation."

While this language clearly suggests that some such activity is acceptable, churches have had a hard time determining just exactly what level will pass muster with the Internal Revenue Service. Because of the verbiage "no substantial part," and varying court interpretations as to just exactly what "substantial" means, churches are very shy about engaging in any lobbying activity on issues at all because of the fear that they could lose their tax exempt status. In an effort to give churches a better idea of just exactly how much in the way of resources they can devote to grass roots lobbying, we have drafted a proposal which would give churches and the IRS a bright line test.

Working with legislative counsel, we have crafted a proposal which allows churches to continue to maintain their tax exempt status as long as they do not make lobbying expenditures in a taxable year "in excess of an amount equal to 20 percent of such organization's gross revenue for such year." This "20 percent rule" for lobbying activity parallels another provision in the Code for nonprofits (501(h)).

The second part of the proposal addresses church involvement in actual campaign activity. The Code currently states that churches cannot engage in "any political campaign on behalf of—or in opposition to—any candidate for public office." In other words, a church is prohibited from campaigning for or against a specific candidate.

The current language begs some questions. Is allowing a candidate to come into a church to speak from the pulpit or allowing a meeting of a candidate's volunteers in the church basement really something we want to prohibit? Shouldn't a certain minimal degree of activity be acceptable? Without getting into a

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